

II. Remarks

A. Introduction

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 - 8, 13 - 15, 17 - 20, and 33 - 40 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 13 - 15, 17 - 20 and 33 are independent. Claims 1 - 8 and 33 - 40 have been allowed. Claims 13 - 15 and 17 - 20 have been amended to incorporate the features of the base claim from which they depend, including the features of any intervening claims. No new matter has been introduced by way of these amendments.

B. The rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn

Claim 10 stands rejected as allegedly being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) by U.S. Patent No. 5,013,231 to Fujita *et al.* and U.S. Patent No. 6,059,556 to Koike *et al.* for the reasons set forth on pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action. In addition, claims 11, 24, and 29 stand rejected as allegedly being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) by Published U.S. Application No. 2003/0034577 to Seta for the reasons set forth on pages 3 and 4 of the Office Action. Finally, claims 16 and 21 stand rejected as allegedly being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) by U.S. Patent No. 3,020,591 to Behrer *et al.* for the reasons set forth on page 4 of the Office Action. Applicants offer that the rejections of claims 10, 11, 16, 21, 24, and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

have been rendered moot in light of the cancellation of those claims. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

C. The objection to claims 13 - 15 and 17 - 20 should be withdrawn

On page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner has objected to claims 13 - 15 and 17 - 20 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The Examiner states that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants offer that claims 13 - 15 and 17 - 20 are now allowable in view of the amendments to those claims. Specifically, claims 13 - 15 and 17 - 20 have been rewritten in independent form to include all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance, and a Notice thereof is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 625-3620. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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